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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001151

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SUBJECT: COR PREPARES TO SELECT ELECTIONS COMMISSIONERS

Classified By: Classified by Deputy Political Counselor reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (U) Summary: Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives (CoR) Kahlid Al Attiya announced in the CoR on March 28 that the CoR leadership is moving forward on a process to appoint a new independent high electoral commission (IHEC). The goal is to have the new commission in place by the April 26 legal deadline. Al Attiya said the CoR would use a transparent selection process proposed by the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), which includes provisions for open nominations and the selection on IHEC members ostensibly based on recommendations. While appointments will still likely reflect partisan interests and backroom negotiations, the process may nonetheless enhance the credibility of the new Commission. Provisions for holding provincial and other elections will require separate legislation. End Summary.

COR launches IHEC selection process

¶2. (U) Deputy Speaker of the CoR Kahlid Al Attiya initiated on the floor of the CoR on March 28 the formation of a special CoR committee to select the nine members of the new IHEC. Al Attiya and other CoR sources said the 17 member CoR committee will be chaired by the speaker or a deputy speaker, and consist of 16 additional members selected from existing committees as follows: four from the legal committee, and two from each of the constitutional review, integrity, regions and governorate affairs, civil society organizations, de-Ba'athification, and women's affairs committees.

¶3. (U) Deputy Speaker Al Attiya stated that the CoR would follow the recommended UN selection process for the appointments in order to ensure a fair and transparent outcome. He further stated that work would be completed by April 26 (Note: According to the IHEC Law passed in January, the CoR must appoint the new commission within 60 days of signature of the law by the presidency, which happened on February 26. End Note).

UN Selection Process: What's in it?

¶4. (U) The UN selection process consists of three phases: (1) nomination and vetting, (2) selection, and (3) appointment. Originally designed for a sixty day process, the process will be implemented in a compressed fashion to fit the remaining time available.

¶5. (U) The UN will direct a public information campaign to solicit nominations. This campaign will inform the public about the nomination process and will provide details to prospective nominees about the procedures they need to follow to submit nominations. Nominations may originate from any source, including the Troika, the Council of Ministers, and

individual self-nominations. Post confirms that nomination instructions and forms are available on the CoR's website.

¶6. (U) Nominations will be submitted to the COR nominating committee for vetting. The initial evaluation team will screen applicants to determine if they meet minimum requirements. This initial evaluation team will include UN representatives. The COR nominating committee will create a first shortlist of the nominations that meet minimum requirements. Nominees on the first shortlist will undergo an investigation to determine if the statements they made in their nomination packages with respect to de-Ba'athification, age, residency, and non-partisanship are accurate. The COR nominating committee will then create a second shortlist of the nominations that pass the investigation.

¶7. (U) To ensure transparency, the COR nominating committee will maintain, with UN assistance, a public list of submitted nominations that is updated and available for viewing on a daily basis.

¶8. (U) Nominees on the second shortlist will be invited to Baghdad for interviews. The COR nominating committee will conduct the interviews and select a final shortlist.

¶9. (U) The full COR shall vote on each nominee on the final shortlist. For every rejected nominee, the COR nominating committee will submit a replacement nominee from those remaining on the second short list.

Comment

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¶10. (C) Comment: The acceptance by the CoR of the UNAMI proposal is a modest but positive step, although no doubt the primary political parties will seek to ensure their favored candidates are ultimately placed on the IHEC -- even UNAMI officials acknowledge this fact. The IHEC law similarly requires that the commission have "balanced" representation among Iraq's ethnic and religious groups. In recess or without a quorum for much of the past month, the CoR has compressed the process for the selection the IHEC into just four weeks. According to CoR contacts, the web page with the application for commissioner has already received 3,000 hits. The process of vetting the applications alone may take more time and effort than CoR members initially expected, raising the possibility that the April 26 deadline may be difficult to achieve. End Comment.
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